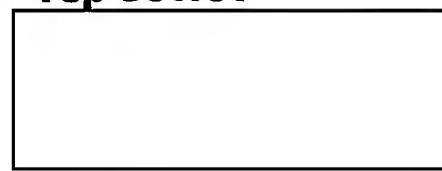


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27 February 1967

# *Central Intelligence Bulletin*

## *CONTENTS*

25X1

India: Congress Party leaders face potentially divisive issues in wake of electoral reverses. (Page 4)

Disarmament: Apprehension regarding the draft nuclear nonproliferation treaty spreading in Benelux countries. (Page 5)

El Salvador: Coup plotters accept President Rivera's plans to insure government victory in 5 March elections. (Page 6)

UK-Malta: Negotiations to start Tuesday. (Page 7)

25X1

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25X1

25X1

Approved For Release 2003/05/19 : CIA-RDP79T00975A009700090001-5

Next 3 Page(s) In Document Exempt

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India: Congress Party leaders, scheduled to meet today in New Delhi, will be faced with several potentially divisive issues in the wake of the reverses suffered in last week's elections.

One of the problems likely to be discussed is whether to choose a new prime minister before or after the lame duck session of parliament beginning in mid-March. Another question facing the party leaders will be how to handle the resignation of several defeated cabinet ministers. Underlying these decisions will be the serious problem of how to improve the party's badly shaken position both at the national and state levels.

New alignments and power relationships may become apparent soon in the party, which has a slim but absolute majority in the new parliament. In the states, however, Congress will have an absolute majority in only 8 of the 16 in which elections were held.

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Disarmament: [Apprehension regarding the draft nuclear nonproliferation treaty may be spreading within the European community.]

[Netherlands Foreign Minister Luns told Ambassador Knight on 24 February that he would not be surprised if Dutch opinion on the treaty moves much closer to negative West German views. He said that, in view of the strong German and Italian feelings, his government was beginning to have "cold feet" about its previous support. Belgian opinion regarding the treaty also has seemed more reserved than it was before Belgian Foreign Minister Harmel's visit to Bonn last week.]

[A new element in Benelux thinking is concern that the treaty might become an additional obstacle to Britain's accession to the Common Market.]

[the Dutch fear France is maneuvering to be in a position to claim that London has showed "too little concern for European integration" in its support of the treaty.]

[The Italians likewise seem increasingly preoccupied with the alleged implications of the treaty for European integration. A senior Italian Foreign Ministry official told the US Embassy in Rome last week that if the treaty is signed as now drafted, France would be confirmed in its dominant position in the community and "would never let the UK in."]

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El Salvador: [President Rivera has taken measures to ensure a government victory in the 5 March election, although Communist-backed candidates will be permitted to run.]

[An important objective in the moves is to forestall a possible military coup.]

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[In a further move to forestall a coup attempt, Rivera and his aides are meeting with other military commanders and members of the country's oligarchy to assure them that the government candidate will win.]

[The presidential and vice-presidential candidates of the PAR, disqualified last week because of technical flaws in their registration documents, have submitted new documentation and are continuing a vigorous campaign.]

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NOTES

UK-Malta: [Negotiations on the planned cutback of British forces in Malta, which will probably start in London Tuesday, may help remove some of the heat from this issue. Britain made it possible for talks to begin by dropping its precondition that Malta lift the restrictions it had placed on UK forces on the island in recent weeks. The Maltese Government had agreed to the discussions after the British offered to extend the reductions over five years instead of four, to concentrate the bulk of the cutbacks in the last two years, and to discuss Malta's other demands.]

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